WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An apparatus for withdrawing a tissue specimen, comprising:

an endoscope including an endoscopic shaft having proximal and distal ends and a lumen extending therebetween;

at least one hoop-like support member selectively slideable within the lumen from a first position wherein the hoop-like member has a first diameter to at least one second position wherein the hoop-like member has a second diameter which is different from the first diameter;

a pouch having first and second ends, the first end being an open end attached to the at least one hoop-like support member, the pouch defining a container therein for retaining the tissue specimen; and

a remote actuator disposed proximate the proximal end of the endoscopic shaft, the remote actuator being selectively actuateable to close the first end to encapsulate the tissue specimen.

2. An apparatus for withdrawing a tissue specimen according to claim 1 further comprising a second hoop-like support member, the second end of the pouch being an open end attached to the second hoop-like support member.

3. An apparatus for withdrawing a tissue specimen according to claim 2 wherein the pouch includes at least one strut disposed between the hoop-like support members for

further defining the container for retaining the tissue specimen.

4. An apparatus for withdrawing a tissue specimen according to claim 2 wherein the diameter of the second hoop-like support member is selectively expandable from a first diameter within the lumen to a second diameter outside the lumen.

5. An apparatus for withdrawing a tissue specimen according to claim 2 wherein the diameter of the first hoop-like support member is selectively contractible from a first diameter within the lumen to a second diameter within the lumen.

6. An apparatus for withdrawing a tissue specimen according to claim 1 wherein the at least one of hoop-like support member includes a pair of arcuate portions which slidingly reciprocate with respect to one another to vary the diameter of the at least one hoop member.

7. An apparatus for withdrawing a tissue specimen according to claim 1 wherein the first hoop-like support member is disposed in a pre-loaded configuration within the lumen such that the diameter of the first hoop-like support member automatically expands when the first hoop-like support member is extended from the distal end of the endoscopic shaft.

8. A method for withdrawing a tissue specimen through an endoscope comprising the steps of:

providing:

a grasping instrument;

an endoscope including an endoscopic shaft having proximal and distal ends and a lumen extending therebetween;

first and second hoop-like support members, each of the hoop-like support members being selectively slideable within the lumen from a first position to at least one second position, each of the hoop-like support members including a diameter which is variable from a first diameter to at least one different diameter; and

a pouch having first and second ends which attach to respective first and second hoop-like support members, the pouch defining a container therein for retaining the tissue specimen;

grasping the tissue specimen with the grasping instrument;

sliding the first and second hoop-like members from the first to second positions such that the diameter of the second hoop-like member expands and encapsulates the tissue specimen;

closing the second end of the pouch about the tissue specimen;

withdrawing the grasping instrument through the lumen;

closing the first end of the pouch about the tissue specimen; and

withdrawing the tissue specimen and pouch proximally through the lumen.

9. An apparatus for retrieving a tissue specimen, comprising:

a shaft having proximal and distal ends and a lumen extending therebetween;

a first support member in the shape of a loop and a second support member in the shape of a loop, the first support member and the second support member being slidably received in the lumen; and

a pouch extending between the first support member and the second support member, the second support member being expandable form a first configuration to a second configuration.